

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 7-17, 19-24 and 26-31 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 12, 13, 23 and 27 have been amended, claims 6, 18 and 25 have been cancelled, and claims 29-31 have been added by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 1, 2 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hebb et al.; claims 3, 5-11, 13-26 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable Hebb et al. in view of Harriman et al.; and claims 12 and 27 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter. In light of this indication, claims 12 and 27 have been rewritten in independent form.

In addition, the present application currently includes independent claims 1, 13 and 23 (as well as the newly allowed independent claims 12 and 27). For example, independent claim 1 is directed to a cell processing method in an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) switch. The method includes storing unicast cells and multicast cells in a plurality of shared buffers and storing addresses of the respective cells in address queues, giving respective priorities to the cells stored in the buffer, and reading out the cells from the buffer according to the given priorities. Further, reading out the cells from the buffer according to the

assigned priorities includes reading out in a first cycle a highest priority unicast cell from each buffer if one exists and not reading out any multicast cells in the same corresponding buffer, and if during the first cycle, a respective buffer does not include a unicast cell, but includes a multicast cell, reading out the multicast cell during the first cycle even if a multicast cell with a higher priority exists along with a unicast cell in another buffer. Independent claims 13 and 23 include similar features in a varying scope.

In a non-limiting example, Figure 8 illustrates reading out in a first cycle a highest priority unicast cells from buffers #2 and #4 and not reading multicast cells M_1 in buffer #2 and M_3 and M_4 in buffer #4, and also during the first cycle reading out the multicast cell M_2 (even though it has a lower priority than the multicast cell M_1 in buffer #2) because buffer #3 does not include a unicast cell that needs to be read out. See also paragraphs [62] - [65] in the specification.

On the contrary, Hebb et al. is merely directed to performing logical multicasting in a first network device so as to permit a downstream network device to forward cells in a manner which resembles spatial multicasting (see col. 2, lines 13-17). The prioritization of the different cells in Hebb et al. is shown in Figure 3, for example, in which queues 100a have higher priority cells than queue 100b, etc. (see col. 5, lines 23-45). There is no description in Hebb et al. about prioritizing between unicast and multicasting cells nor reading out in a first cycle a highest priority unicast cell from each buffer if one exists and

not reading out any multicast cells in the same corresponding buffer, and if during the first cycle, a respective buffer does not include a unicast cell, but includes a multicast cell, reading out the multicast cell during the first cycle even if a multicast cell with a higher priority exists along with a unicast cell in another buffer.

Further, Harriman et al. discusses comparing the priority of the unicast and multicast queues in col. 7, lines 33-36 and discusses an arbitration logic for determining whether a unicast or multicast cell addresses is selected on each output cycle in col. 7, lines 43-45, for example. However, Harriman et al. does not teach or suggest the reading out the cells of unicast and multicast cells from the buffer as in the present invention.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted independent claims 1, 13 and 23 and each claims depending therefrom are allowable, and each of the rejections noted in the outstanding Office Action have also been overcome.

Further, new claims 29-31 have been added to set forth the invention in a varying scope, and Applicants respectfully submit the new claims are supported by the originally-filed specification (see, for example Figure 8). It is respectfully submitted the new claims further define over the applied art.

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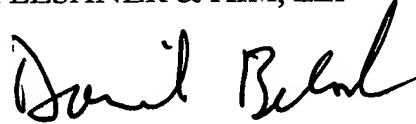
Docket No. P-0230

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney, **David A. Bilodeau**, at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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